

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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O R 262210Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5659

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5132

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: NAVY FORCES OUSTER OF ADMIRAL FAURA

REF: (A) LIMA 5103 (B) LIMA 4920 (C) IR 68760100 75

1. THE EMBASSY CANNOT YET FULLY RECONSTRUCT EVENTS WHICH LED TO SURPRISE RETIREMENT OF NAVY MINISTER FAURA ON JUNE 25 AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY AUGUSTO GALVEZ VELARDE. IT IS BEGINNING TO APPEAR THAT THE NAVY ITSELF BROUGHT ABOUT THESE DEVELOPMENTS IN ORDER TO GET RID OF AN UNPOPULAR MINISTER WHO WAS IMPOSED UPON IT BY PRESIDENT VELASCO. IF THIS IS TRUE, VELASCO HAS SUFFERED A REVERSE, TENDING TO CONFIRM THAT HIS POWER IS ERODING (REF B).

2. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MOST IN THE NAVY WANTED TO SEE FAURA REPLACED. THE NAVY HAS NOT FORGOTTEN THE HUMILIATING OUSTER OF ADMIRAL VARGAS IN MAY 1974 AND THE SUBSEQUENT RETIREMENT OR ENFORCED RETIREMENT OF 8 OF PERU'S 10 VICE-ADMIRALS. THIS YEAR NO ONE WAS PROMOTED TO VICE ADMIRAL.

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3. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, ADMIRAL JORGE FERNANDEZ DAVILA AGREED TO PRESS THE NAVY'S DEMANDS UPON VELASCO, REQUESTING

FAURA'S REMOVAL. FERNANDEZ, CONSIDERED BY SOME TO BE THE MOST VELASQUISTA OF THE NAVY'S SENIOR OFFICERS, IS SAID TO HAVE ACTED AGAINST FAURA BECAUSE THE LATTER ALLEGEDLY WAS SEEKING TO TRANSFER FERNANDEZ. AT THE SAME TIME, WITH OR WITHOUT FERNANDEZ' APPROVAL, THE NAVY SAILED OUT OF CALLAO.

4. SOURCE CONTINUES THAT FAURA'S COMMENTS TO THE PRESS ON JUNE 20 HAD GOTTEN HIM INTO TROUBLE. ACCORDING TO LA PRENSA, WHICH USES QUOTATION MARKS, HE SAID, "UNLIKE THE PAST, WHEN OUR COUNTRY WAS DISUNITED AND ENGAGED IN STERILE POLITICAL RIVALRIES WHICH LED IT TO GRAVE NATIONAL CATASTROPHES, TODAY OUR PEOPLE ARE UNITED AND IDENTIFIED WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE REVOLUTION, AS WAS DEMONSTRATED IN THE PATRIOTIC ACT OF JUNE 7, AND ARE MARCHING TOWARD THEIR DESTINY OF PROGRESS AND WELL-BEING DETERMINED TO DEFEND THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY IN CONDITIONS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE WHICH EXISTED IN THE WAR OF 1879." (ACCORDING TO SOME PERUVIANS, FAURA WAS SUGGESTING THAT PERU IS CAPABLE OF WAGING WAR.)

5. REPORTEDLY FACED WITH A NAVY MUTINY, SOURCE CLAIMS THAT VELASCO DECIDED TO REMOVE FAURA. THE NATION, AND NAVY, WERE INFORMED OF THIS DRAMATIC DECISION WHEN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS WERE INTERRUPTED FOR ANNOUNCEMENT ON JUNE 25 (REF A). BUT ACCORDING SAME SOURCE, VELASCO ALSO DECIDED TO TURN THE TABLES ON FERNANDEZ AND HE HAS LOST HIS JOB AS FLEET COMMANDER TO REAR ADMIRAL JOSE CARVAJAL PAREJA. SOURCE DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER FERNANDEZ WILL REMAIN IN NAVY OR NOT. VELASCO PRESUMABLY WAS ANGRY AT FERNANDEZ FOR HIS COMPLICITY IN THE NAVY'S "REVOLT" OR, EVEN MORE LIKELY, FOR HIS INABILITY TO PREVENT THE FLEET'S SAILING OUT OF CALLAO. FERNANDEZ' REMOVAL HAS NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED.

6. NEW NAVY MINISTER GALVEZ IS REPUTEDLY WELL-LIKED BY THE NAVY BUT THE LEAST ABLE OF THOSE WHO ONCE WERE THE NAVY'S 10 VICE ADMIRALS. GALVEZ RESPECTS MORALES BERMUDEZ, AS APPARENTLY MOST NAVY OFFICERS DO, SO IF ANYTHING MORALES BERMUDEZ COMES OUT AHEAD WITH FAURA'S OUSTER. AFTER LEARNING OF HIS APPOINTMENT, GALVEZ REPORTEDLY VISITED NAVY FLAGSHIP GRAU AND TOLD THE MEN THAT THEY
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MUST WORK TOGETHER FOR PERU AND AGAINST COMMUNISM.

7. AS COMMENTED UPON IN REF B, IT APPEARS THAT POWER IS INDEED SHIFTING IN PERU. TODAY'S PRESS ALSO ANNOUNCES THAT PRIME MINISTER MORALES BERMUDEZ DEPARTS ON JUNE 30 FOR A FIVE-DAY SWING THROUGH SOUTHEASTERN PERU, INCLUDING "DIALOGUES" AT CUZCO AND PUNO. EARLIER, ONE SOURCE HAD TOLD EMBOFFS THAT VELASCO HAD DECIDED TO PUT A STOP TO THESE DIALOGUES, WHICH INCREASE MORALES BERMUDEZ' LEADERSHIP STATUE.

8. WE WILL TRY TO RECONSTRUCT EVENTS MORE SATISFACTORILY IN THE
NEXT FEW DAYS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE QUESTION OF
POWER AND WHETHER OR NOT VELASCO HAS SUFFERED A REALLY
SIGNIFICANT REVERSE.
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